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ABSTRACT

San Juan School District, a rural school district in the southeast corner of Utah, implemented the Rural Futures Development (RFD) Strategy program to develop greater public involvement in the education process. Geographically one of the largest school districts (approximately 8,000 square miles) in the U.S., San Juan serves Anglos who mainly live in the northern part of the county and Navajos who live in the southern part in a very large and remote area. The San Juan RFD Strategy has three basic components: the school community group (SCG); the process facilitator team; and the five step problem-solving process used by the SCG to identify community problems and concerns, search for alternative approaches to problem solving, plan for action, implement the plan, and assess the results and recycle. The RFD project has proved to be very valuable to the district. There are currently four SCGs and one faculty task force which are very productively engaged in the educational process. Educators in San Juan are responding more accurately to the needs of the people in San Juan and the people feel better about the educational system because they have a part in developing the system. A glossary of terms and an appendix covering the problem solving process and related items conclude the document. (BRR)

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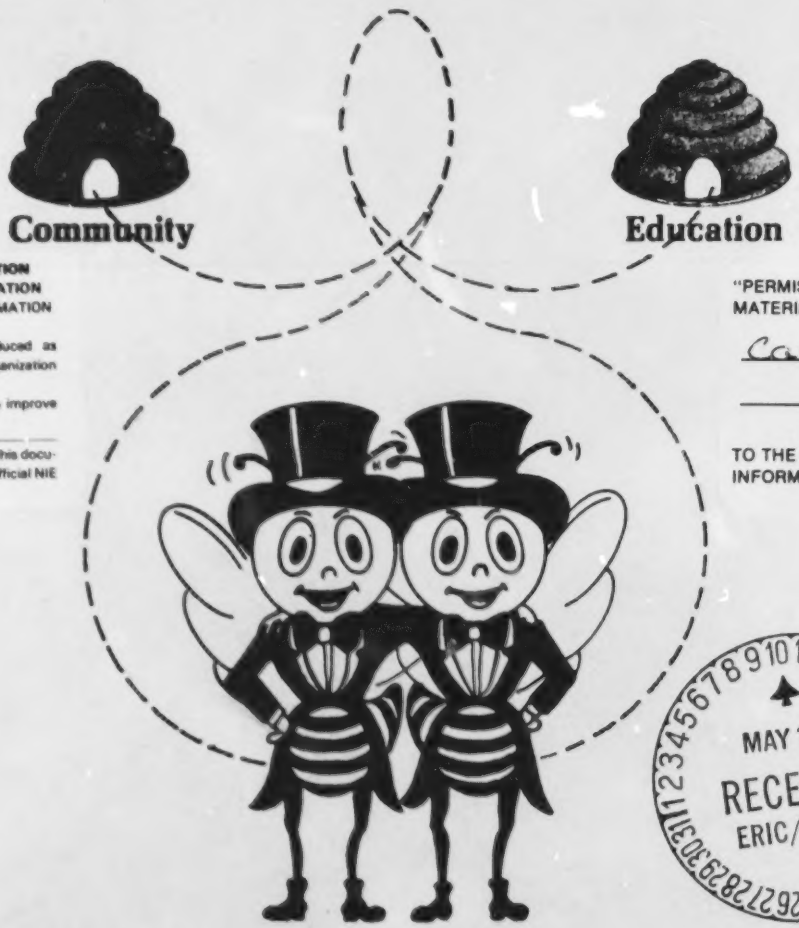
Strengthening the Community/Education Partnership:

The San Juan RFD Model of Public Involvement

Utah State Board of Education



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Public Involvement Using The Rural Futures Development Strategy

Strengthening the Community/Education Partnership: The San Juan RFD Model of Public Involvement

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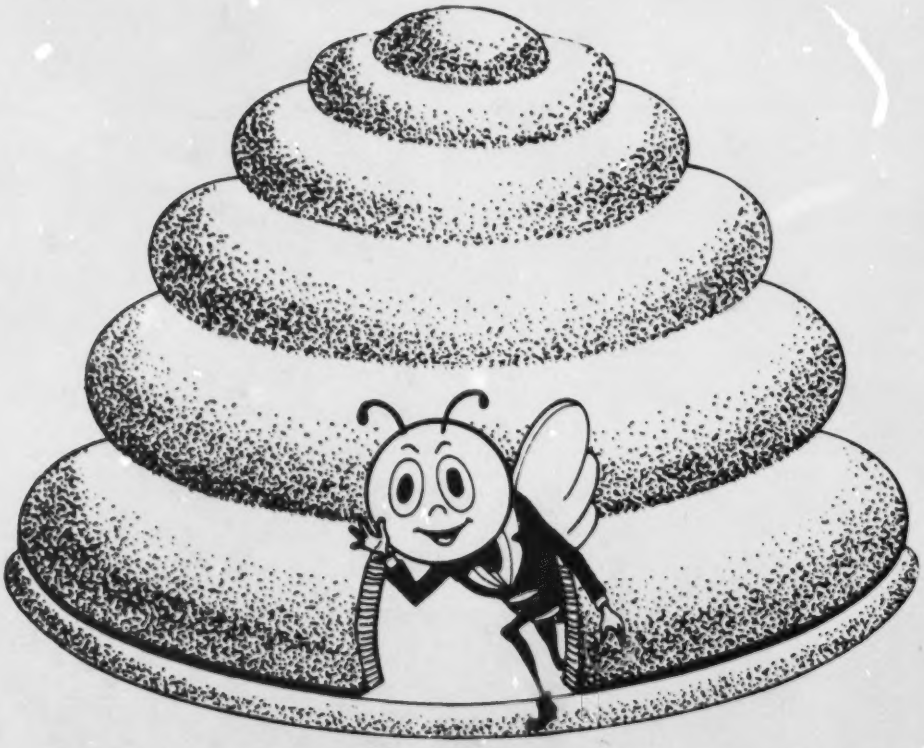

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Special thanks is also given to Jan Christiansen, public involvement specialist for the San Juan School District, for her valuable help in the development of the manuscript.

Thanks is also expressed to the secretarial staff of the Community Education Unit, Office of the Utah State Board of Education and the media and publications departments for their untiring efforts.

SPECIAL NOTE:

The approach to public involvement in the San Juan School District called the Rural Futures Development Strategy was designed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory under the direction of Rowan C. Stutz. This booklet includes information on the Rural Futures Development Strategy and, therefore, the authors would like to gratefully acknowledge the Northwest Regional Education Laboratory for their part in the development of the model.

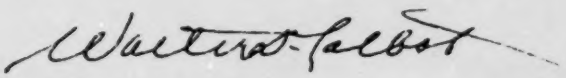
The RFD materials developed by the Rural Education Program of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and cited

or reproduced herein are not as yet completed or published. Copyright in these materials is held by the Laboratory. For information concerning the developmental status of the RFD materials, contact the Rural Education Program, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 710 S. W. Second Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97204.

Foreword

"Recognizing the gap that exists between the school and the community, and recognizing that education is a product of the total community, the need for educators and community members to work together in a partnership to improve the quality of education and community life has never been more critical than it is today. No one educational institution in society, such as the home or the school, can do the job alone. There is a great need in America today for a mutually reinforcing and supportive relationship to develop between the school and the community in order that real progress can be made in meeting the education needs of the total community.

Systems for meaningfully involving the public in the education decision-making process need to be developed to facilitate the development of this partnership."



WALTER D. TALBOT
State Superintendent of
Public Instruction

Preface

Educators and community members must work together in a partnership to solve problems of mutual concern and meet the educational needs of the total community.

Systems of meaningfully involving the public in educational decision making need to be developed to facilitate this partnership between community and education.

This booklet describes one approach to involving the public in educational decision-making that has been implemented in the San Juan School District in Utah. The purpose of the booklet is to share this approach with those who are interested in developing systems of public involvement in their areas.

Keep in mind that each community is unique and one particular approach to public involvement may not work for all. However, the San Juan RDF model is very adaptable and can be used in many different community situations.

Hopefully, this booklet will be helpful to you. Any requests for further assistance or information should be directed to the Community Education Unit of the Utah State Board of Education.

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Introduction

Early in 1972 the Utah State Board of Education hosted a conference concerned with providing state leadership for change in education. One of the outcomes of this conference was a state-wide needs assessment administered to educators across the state for the purpose of determining areas of major concern in education. The results of this survey indicated that the number one concern was the lack of communication between parents, other community members and the schools.

After considering these findings, the Utah State Board of Education began to take steps to address this problem. The Board more recently has adopted a formal position paper in support of the concept of "public involvement in education decision making" and has established public involvement as its number one priority for 1976-77 and again for 1977-78.

Approximately the same time the State Board of Education recognized the need for increased public involvement in education decision making, the Utah Legislature passed a law governing the expenditure of community education funds in the State of Utah. The law states that funds shall be used to, "...engage the public in determining the role the schools shall play in solving individual and community problems."

The challenge of assisting the Board in the implementation of public involvement

was primarily placed with the Community Education Unit. The Unit sought greater understanding of this important dimension of community education and through the acquisition and application of skills moved strongly in this direction. In 1976 the Utah State Board of Education submitted a federal proposal and was funded through the Federal Community Schools Act to hire additional staff to offer technical assistance to local school districts interested in establishing public involvement models.

Five model districts were identified during the project year. This booklet is about the San Juan Model, one of the five that has been documented.

Unit 1. The Community

The San Juan School District is located in the southeast corner of Utah, with Colorado and Arizona as its eastern and southern boundaries. Geographically it is one of the largest school districts in the United States covering approximately 8,000 square miles. The northern tip of the large Navajo Indian Reservation lies in the southern part of the school district.

The population of the county, approximately 12,000, is split almost equally between Navajo Indians and Anglos. The Anglos, for the most part, live in the two northern communities of Blanding and Monticello and the Navajos in a very large and remote area with very limited economic development and a poor communication system in the southern section of the district. A large percentage of the Navajos do not speak English and have been generally isolated from the northern communities.

The San Juan School District is considered to be a rural district. Many communities are very small such as Mexican Hat, Oljato and Montezuma Creek and most are at least 25 miles apart. Monticello,

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where the district offices are located, to Oljato, one of the southern-most communities, is approximately 100 miles.

The area is noted for its scenic beauty. Monument Valley, Lake Powell, Rainbow Bridge, Natural Bridges National Monument and other areas of natural beauty are all located in the district.

The unique characteristics of the community both geographic and demographic have had a direct bearing on the direction the district took in involving the people in education-decision making.

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Unit 2. Model Development

Chapter 1 - A Brief History and Rationale for Public Involvement in the District

During the mid and later sixties, with the advent of social legislation and the passage of civil rights laws at the national level, attention to meeting the needs of the Navajos in the San Juan School District has become more apparent. With the recognition of the need for equal educational opportunities, regardless of race, came a series of developments at the state, the county, and in the school system to provide additional services. The area experienced a continuing influx of social service personnel bringing services, raising the level of expectation and awareness of the Navajos of their potential for future development.

An example of the changes brought about by the growing recognition of the Navajos is the area of student enrollment. In 1959, Indian children made up only 6% of the district's total student enrollment; in 1975, 47% of the district's enrollment were Indian students.

As the Navajo students began to attend the predominately Anglo public schools and rely less on boarding schools, many of them had to travel three hours or more each day to attend school. These and other concerns about the education needs of the Navajo people resulted in the "Oljato Study" by the Utah State Board of Education in May of 1973. The study was under the direction of Dr. Lyle Wright and had as its purpose the determination of the educational

needs of the Navajo population and what facilities and programs would be required to meet those needs. Dr. Wright conducted interviews with various groups and individuals and made recommendations to the board. One recommendation was that the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory be contacted and discussions initiated concerning the establishment of a joint project in San Juan. After considerable discussion and negotiation between the school district, the State Board of Education, the Utah Navajo Development Council, the Navajo Tribe and the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, the Rural Education Program was initiated in August of 1974 using the Rural Futures Development Strategy.

Although the district was working towards involving the Navajo people through the rural education program (in February of 1975, after the program was started, school community groups recommended to the board that two new high schools be built in the reservation areas and in March, 1975 the board accepted these recommendations) a class action lawsuit was filed in November of 1974 by Navajo students and their parents. The defendants were charged with having pursued a long-standing pattern of deep-rooted racial discrimination which had resulted in unequal educational opportunities for Native American children attending the San Juan schools. In addition to other topics, the suit alleged discrimination resulting from failure to appropriate funds on an equal basis, failure to provide high schools and other facilities in predominately Navajo areas, and failure to provide bi-cultural and bi-lingual education programs.

The lawsuit was settled out of court with the plaintiffs in the fall of 1975. The terms of the settlement required the school

district to build new high schools in the southern portion of the district, to reimburse parents who had to travel more than one and a quarter miles one way to a bus stop 14¢/mile and to implement bilingual and bi-cultural courses in all district schools. The bicultural courses were to emphasize Navajo history and culture and were to be available in all schools by the start of the 1976-77 school year.

Within this setting, the Rural Education Program was implemented in the San Juan District.

Chapter 2. Components of the Model*

The Rural Education Program, using the Rural Futures Development Strategy, used in San Juan is organized into three basic components:

1. THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY GROUP

   A temporary group of community members is formed to determine who the leaders in the community are as well as determine what groups in the community should be represented on a permanent school community group. The temporary group conducts an opinion leader survey in the community and presents recommendations to the Board for a permanent school-community group.

   The Board then officially appoints the members of the school community group to serve as representatives of the community. The group is made up of lay citizens, students and school staff. Their purpose is to work together to help solve educational problems.

*Adapted from The RFD Process Facilitator Manual, NWREL, 1975

Many times when problems are identified, a task force group is formed composed of members of the school community group plus resource people (school staff, experts in various areas, etc.) and other interested individuals in the community. This task force works on an identified and validated problem, searches for alternative approaches to solving the problem and gives its recommendation to the SCG. The SCG then passes the recommendation on to the board or asks the task force to make adjustments or expand the study. Once the task force has helped satisfactorily resolve the problem, it is dissolved.

2. <u>THE PROCESS FACILITATOR TEAM</u>

Persons are hired by the district to work with the school community group to assist them in the process of solving problems.

Process facilitators work with the school community group to help members of the group develop problem-solving, communication, leadership and other skills necessary for the effective functioning of the group. The process facilitators are not "answer people" but are concerned with helping groups help themselves and develop self-governance skills.

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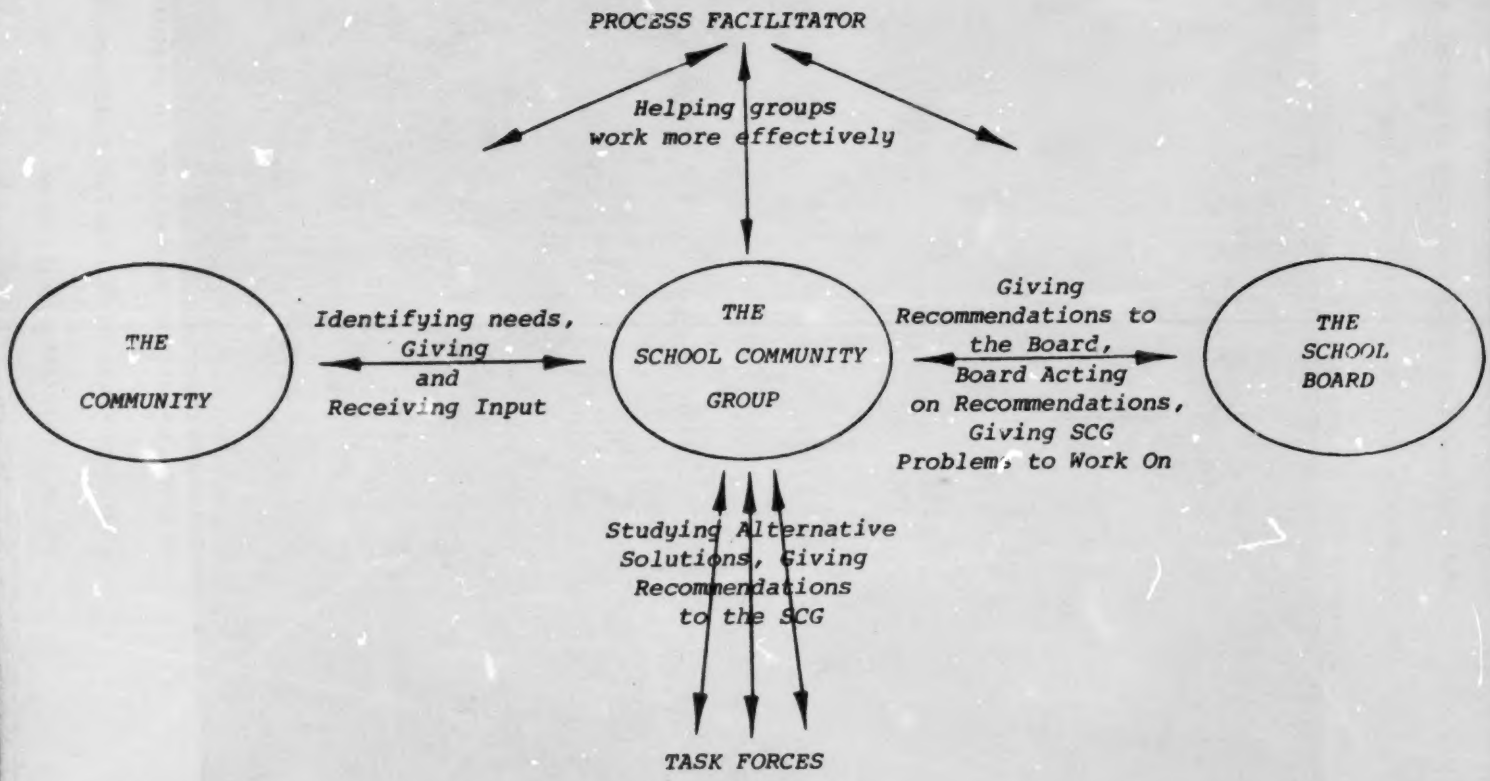
The San Juan RFD Model


PROCESS FACILITATOR
Helping groups work more effectively
THE COMMUNITY
Identifying needs, Giving and Receiving Input
THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY GROUP
Giving Recommendations to the Board, Board Acting on Recommendations, Giving SCG Problem, to Work On
THE SCHOOL BOARD
Studying Alternative Solutions, Giving Recommendations to the SCG
TASK FORCES

3. *THE SYSTEMATIC PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS**

The systematic problem solving process is one of the key components in the school community process. (See appendix for a more detailed explanation)

The process consists of five different phases:

A. *Focusing on the problem*

The group determines what the educational concerns are by surveying community members as to their concerns. Concerns are prioritized and the group moves into the second phase of the problem-solving process.

B. *Searching for alternatives*

When a problem has been identified, either the total group will attempt to solve it or a task force group will be formed. A task force group consists of those in the group who are most interested in the problem and others from the community who are interested or affected by the problem. Often resource people are called in to help the group become more informed about the problem. Whether the total group or a task force group works on a particular problem, each group attempts to search out all possible alternative solutions by calling in resource people, visiting areas with similar problems, brainstorming possible solutions, etc. When the group

*Adapted from The Process Facilitator's Manual, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon

feels they have determined the best possible solution, they present it to the SCG for their input and approval. The SCG then makes its recommendation to the appropriate level which may mean a report to the board of education for their action.

C. Planning for Action

If the recommendation is accepted, the SCG or the task force group helps plan with school staff implementation of the recommendation. This includes extensive interaction of the P. F.'s and the SCG members with appropriate members of the educational community.

D. Carrying out the Plan

The plan is then carried out by the school staff with the help of the SCG or by the SCG with the help of the school staff whichever seems more appropriate given the problem or need.

E. Assessing the Results

The SCG then evaluates the success of the approach to the solution and if successful, starts on a new problem using the five step process. If the problem hasn't been satisfactorily solved, the SCG re-evaluates and goes back through the five step process.

The Systematic Problem Solving Process

Focusing on the Problem

Searching for Alternatives

Planning for Action

Carrying Out the Plan

Assessing the Results

Chapter 3. Implementation of the Model

Four process facilitators were hired and began their work in November of 1974. The P.F.'s first formed school community groups in the areas of Montezuma Creek and Monument Valley using the RFD strategy. Two process facilitators worked in each of the areas. (It should be noted that throughout the project, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and Utah State Board of Education Community Education staff worked with the process facilitators and participated with them in developing and conducting training.

The opinion leaders representing various groups in the areas were identified through survey by a temporary school community group. The names of the opinion leaders were sent to the school board and the board officially appointed citizens, school staff and students to serve on the two school community groups.

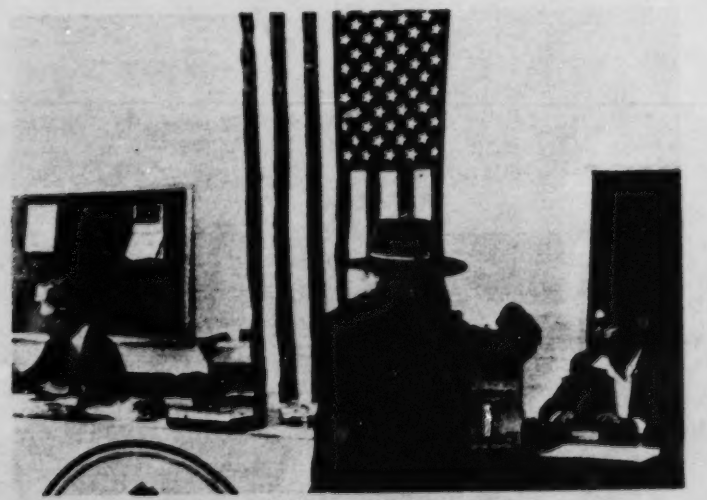
The first phase of the problem-solving procers--focusing on the problem--was the first large-scale task of the SCG's. This involved administering a needs assessment in the two areas. Since many of the adult Navajos did not speak English, it was necessary to go from home to home to interview with each person in their native tongue. Surveys were flown into the remote area of Navajo Mountain and given out at chapter meetings (meetings of the tribal governing system which includes all Navajo community members.) Stations were set up at the

local post office and health clinics to interview people. In all, some 1500 people were personally interviewed.

The number one priority of more than 95% of the people was to build a new high school in each of the two areas. The people wanted the high schools to stress vocational education and also include Navajo culture and history in the curriculum. The SCG then went into the "Searching for Alternatives" phase of the problem-solving process.

After the needs assessment and basic search steps were completed, work began on the preparation for a seven million dollar bond election. The bond election to finance the building of the two new high schools was a very controversial issue throughout the district. Basically the Navajos were in favor, while many of the Anglos of the northern section of the district were opposed.

The SCG groups had a very definite effect in helping the bond election pass. The groups organized a voter-registration drive concentrating on the Navajo people. It was the strong vote in these communities that overcame the negative votes in Monticello and Blanding where the vote was either very



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close or against the bond election. It is interesting to note the number of people in the southern areas who voted in a previous election for a U. S. Senator compared to the bond election.

These comparisons as well as the votes for and against the bond election are presented in the following table:

TABLE 1**

Number of individuals voting in the 1974 election of a U. S. Senator and the 1975 school bond election - by voter district:

Voting District	School Bond Election			Election of U. S. Senator
	For	Against	Total	
Bluff	142	33	175	168
Montezuma Creek*	172	12	186	98
Aneth*	82	21	103	92
Cedar Point	1	19	20	26
Ucola	15	30	45	98
LaSal	9	19	28	68
Spanish Valley	9	8	17	28
Monticello	173	381	554	818
North Blanding	142	170	312	454
South Blanding	181	133	314	374
Mexican Hat*	138	6	144	46
Oljato*	165	8	173	87
Navajo Mountain*	107	1	108	74
Halls Crossing	3	7	10	16

(*Represents those areas where the P.F.'s and SCG's worked actively to promote the passage of the school bond.)

The bond election was a key step in the process in that it opened the doors to move further into the search phase and for SCG task forces to be formed to address each of the areas then under consideration such as building facilities, site location, name of the schools, curriculum, teacher housing, etc.

**An informative report about the San Juan experience with public involvement is the Evaluation Report of the Rural Futures Development (RFD) Project in San Juan County, by Robert L. Ellison, The Institute for Behavioral Research in Creativity, February, 1977.

An example of a group in the search phase was the task force concerned with facilities. The group of Navajo task force members visited many high schools throughout Utah to get a better understanding of what facilities they wanted at their high school.

Since the problem identified was for the school district to build two new high schools, which take considerable time to build by the communities, the SCG's haven't gone through the entire problem solving process. They are still in the searching for alternatives and planning for action phases. The Whitehorse High School at Montezuma Creek is under construction and the high school planned for the Monument Valley area has been delayed due to water problems at the site selected.

Both groups are working on curriculum and other concerns related to the building of the new high schools.

Other SCG's Formed

In the spring of 1975, one of the P.F.'s began work with the faculties of the junior and senior high schools in Blanding, preparing them for further SCG work, particularly that of the Blanding SCG scheduled to be started that fall. The faculty task force group consisted of 12 school staff members who received extensive training in the problem-solving process. They developed a list of priority concerns and carried cut a number of projects as summarized in Unit III - Outcomes.

Blanding SCG

The P.F. helped the faculty prepare for the organization of a school community group in Blanding which occurred in the fall of 1975.

A survey of the community was taken and five priorities were identified. Four task force groups went through the problem-solving process and in doing so made recommendations to the Board concerning reading, communications, extra-curricular activities and improving classroom instruction. As the group progressed, it responded to needs brought to the group by members of the community and developed and reported its recommendations to the Board or other appropriate levels.

Monticello SCG Formed

In the fall of 1976 a fourth school community group was formed. This group is starting through the problem-solving process by surveying the community and identifying concerns. The group is now to the point where it has made recommendations to the Board which have been accepted and acted upon.

Chapter 4. Unique Characteristics of the Model

Below are listed some of the characteristics of the model which may make it unique from other models.

1. There is a very close relationship between the local board of education and the school community group. The SCG is officially appointed by the board and acts as an extension of the board, reaching out and gathering information from the community and making recommendations to them.
2. A process facilitator works full time for the school district in working with the SCG's to help them function more effectively. The P.F. teaches skills such as agenda building, goal setting, force field analysis, and communication skills to group members but does it in a non-directive way allowing for group

members to learn by doing and consequently relying on themselves, gaining capacity for self-governance.

3. The SCG's rely heavily on the five step problem-solving process, using it for most if not all of their activities.
4. Task force groups are formed to work on specific problems identified by the community. These task forces are dissolved when the problem is solved.
5. The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory contracted with the San Juan School District for a 22 month period to provide training to P.F.'s, district and state agency personnel in the Rural Futures Development Strategy, this being called the Rural Education Program. They developed extensive materials explaining the various phases of the strategy and methods used to implement them to use in the training.
6. The Community Education Unit of the Office of the Utah State Board of Education helped provide funds for the project and assigned three of their staff to be trained by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and to assist in the training.
7. As part of the Rural Education Program, an independent evaluation of the project was made by the Institute for Behavioral Research and Creativity called "Evaluation Report of the Rural Futures Development (RFD) Project in San Juan County." This report was completed in February of 1977, written by Bob Ellison.

Unit 3. Outcomes

The following positive outcomes for specific SCG's and for the project in general resulted from the implementation of the RFD Strategy in the San Juan School District over approximately a two year period:

MONTEZUMA CREEK SCG

1. *An assessment of the educational needs in the area was taken. A variety of educational needs were ranked and evaluated in terms of their importance.*
2. *Validation of the need for a new high school was obtained through community surveys.*
3. *Site selection criteria were developed including accessaability, convenience, utility sources, future development, etc.*
4. *An evaluation of the alternative sites in terms of the criteria was completed. Sites were then selected for the new high schools.*

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5. Arrangements were made for land acquisition, including grazing rights, environmental clearance, rights of way, archaeological clearance, etc.

6. The promotion and passing of a school bond election were accomplished through house to house visits, development of radio ads, presentations to Chapter meetings, distribution of sample ballots, registration of community members, etc.

7. SCG members made visits to different schools to obtain information on physical facilities as well as types of programs available.

8. The SCG consulted with architects and other facility specialists to obtain information on a variety of possible structural and design characteristics available for the new schools and gave input as to what they wanted.

9. SCG members consulted with experts to learn about school operations, including bi-lingual, bi-cultural curriculum, open schools, community education, vocational training and the accrediting process for high schools.

10. A complete and comprehensive census of community residents was taken to develop accurate measures of the number of students and families living in the large and diverse geographic area of San Juan County.

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11. *The selection of the name, "Whitehorse High School," for the Montezuma Creek area was made.*

12. *SCG members served on the selection committee for the Whitehorse High School principal.*

13. *Ground breaking ceremonies were staged and organized by the SCG for the Whitehorse High School with the participation of the State Superintendent of Schools and live radio coverage.*

14. *Using the problem solving process, SCG members and others presented the need for a recreational complex in Montezuma Creek to the San Juan County commissioners. Plans are now being made to build those facilities next to the new high school.*

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OLJATO SCG

1. An assessment of the educational needs in the area was taken. A variety of educational needs were ranked and evaluated in terms of their importance.
2. Validation of the need for a new high school was obtained through community surveys.
3. Site selection criteria were developed including accessibility, convenience, utility sources, future development, etc.
4. The SCG has selected a site for the high school in the Monument Valley area, but there is still some concern about water availability at the site. Therefore, the Oljato group is not past the site selection stage and is still waiting for go ahead to acquire land for the high school.
5. The promotion and passing of a school bond election were accomplished through house to house visits, development of radio ads, presentations to Chapter meetings, distribution of sample ballots, registration of community members, etc. (Bond election covered both new schools.)
6. SCG members made visits to different schools to obtain information on physical facilities as well as types of programs available.
7. The SCG consulted with architects and other facility specialists to obtain information on a variety of possible structural and design characteristics available for the new schools and gave input as to what they wanted.

8. *SCG members consulted with experts to learn about school operation, including bi-lingual, bi-cultural curriculum, open schools, community education, vocational training and the accrediting process for high schools.*

9. *A census of community residents similar to that in the Montezuma Creek area was taken to develop accurate measures of the number of students and families living in the area.*

10. *The SCG searched for alternative approaches for the housing of teachers at the school site. They developed a proposal and were awarded a grant for this study.*

FACULTY TASK FORCE GROUP

1. *Developed a new schedule for faculty meetings.*
2. *Improved the faculty lounge.*
3. *Developed policies for supervision (what to do when on hall duty, lunch duty, etc.)*
4. *Became more of a resource to the commun ty.*
5. *Continued to function after a year with little or no assistance from the P.F.*

BLANDING SCG

1. *Assessed the educational needs of the community, ranking in priority the most important.*
2. *Through their recommendation to the board, provided the stimulus for the development of a teacher handbook of questions and answers regarding district policies and procedures.*

3. *Through their recommendation to the board, provided the stimulus for the development and distribution of a handbook for instructional aides including responsibilities, qualifications and benefits paid.*

4. *Through their recommendation to the board, provided the stimulus for and assistance in the development of a district evaluation policy for teaching personnel.*

5. *Developed the SCG newsletter to help communicate with the total community what was happening in the schools. (The newsletter has had a place for comments by the superintendent, a principals' corner, school calendar, and any other article which the SCG or community feels is necessary in the newsletter.)*

6. *Helped develop district and school instructional goals. The goals were defined and prioritized by a task force of 35 parents, students, teachers, and administrators and published in the SCG newsletter.*

7. *Started to deal with concerns of community members through informal channels as well as surveys. (People are confident enough in the SCG to now contact members of the group if they have requests, complaints or possible innovations.)*

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8. *Influenced the hiring of a reading specialist. Inservice training in teaching reading is now being given to high school teachers due to the recommendation of the SCG.*
9. *Facilitated greater coordination of resources in the community.*
10. *Trained in communication skills.*

MONTICELLO SCG

Even though the Monticello group was recently formed in the fall of 1976, they already have:

1. *assessed the educational needs and concerns of the Monticello community, ranking the most important in priority.*
2. *Formed task force groups concerned with the top five priorities.*
3. *Made a recommendation to the board related to safety guidelines for activity buses.*
4. *Identified a problem with the English curriculum and in conjunction with appropriate school people resolved the matter.*

GENERAL OUTCOMES

Due to the RFD project, the district has been affected by these outcomes:

1. *Citizens of the San Juan communities are more aware of the many concerns the district is dealing with daily.*

2. *Because of the above, many of the district's antagonists have become a constructive force for improvement and are now some of the district's greatest supporters.*
3. *School and community people are now discussing problems in a more positive manner.*
4. *Community members are invited to attend all meetings related to the school.*
5. *Navajo community members have more of a voice in board meetings and attend them more regularly.*
6. *People in the communities now spend more time in getting involved in educational concerns. District administrators and other school staff are used more as consultants.*
7. *The SCG groups see a great need for involving the district personnel in their activities.*
8. *The school is more in tune with the expectations of parents. They are now working in a meaningful partnership.*
9. *As the district responds to community involvment, it has experienced an increase in the quality of the involvement.*
10. *Schools are feeling support from community members.*
11. *Groups are highly motivated because they feel they're being effective and are getting results.*
12. *Leadership skills of community members are improving.*
13. *Navajo members of SCG's are using problem-solving skills in Chapter meetings.*
14. *Organizational behavior and even design of the educational system is changing to respond more effectively to the needs of the total community.*

Unit 4. Future Directions

Chapter 5. This We Have Learned

The P.F.'s involved in the San Juan RFD project as well as the district, State Board of Education and Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory have learned some important lessons while working with the model. The purpose of this chapter is to share with the reader the principles and ideas gleaned from the project that can possibly be used in other models.

1. *Wisdom and skills are needed for working effectively with special interest groups which may attempt to use the community imvolvement process to focus on or promote their particular issue (usually controversial and emotional issues.) The purpose of the process is to clarify and solve problems and not to fuel controversial issues of special interest groups. Much depends on the skills of the process facilitator to make sure objectivity and positive problem solving procedures are maintained in these situations.*
2. *Good two-way communication is a key factor in the school-community process. The process facilitator and the group itself cannot afford to let the work or recommendations of the group that affects the principal, superintendent, teachers or any other individual or group go on without adequately informing and involving people affected.*

3. The P.F. needs to transfer as many skills as possible to the leadership of the group and to group members in order to make the group more effective and self reliant. The P.F. needs to meet with the group's leadership before and after meetings to help develop the skills needed in working with the group. Group work becomes more exciting and rewarding when the leadership is able to move the group effectively through the problem solving process and when the group feels responsibility and ownership for their work.

4. The RFD process has required full-time process facilitation. The task of systematically involving the public in San Juan has meant the commitment of skilled people.

5. The P.F. cannot be an advocate for any particular group, problem or solution and cannot try to have influence in meetings. He/she must stay as neutral as possible and concentrate on enhancing the capability of the group and the effectiveness of the problem-solving process they are using.

6. The P. F. must avoid creating independence or any kind of power base. The rewards of a facilitator are the success of the group and the solution of problems that are keeping the community/education partnership from reaching its full potential. To manipulate a group for one's own purposes rather than facilitate for the group's purpose or to seek personal power or ego gratification, is to do serious damage to the involvement process.

7. *A P.F. should be from outside the immediate community with which he/she is working to be more effective.*
8. *Facilitation of public involvement focuses on helping people (both individually and collectively) to affect and deal with change.*
9. *A community/education partnership is a constantly evolving process because as goals are reached through completion of tasks, new goals emerge.*
10. *Systematic procedures incorporated into decision making processes lend structure, order and direction.*
11. *Those participating in the decision-making process (problem-solving) must believe that a commitment to action will result.*
12. *People involved in the process must believe that they are engaged in a valuable service.*
13. *People who are affected by a decision or who have a part in the execution of a decision should have the opportunity to influence or participate in making the decision.*
14. *Individuals participating in decision-making should be responsive to the needs of the people they represent and also should be accountable for the results of the decision.*
15. *Processes which maximize involvement in education decision-making increase the overall quality of decisions and also increase the opportunities for human development.*

16. *Facilitation skills are needed at appropriate levels and time periods to initiate, promote and sustain effective public involvement.*

17. *Participating in a community/education partnership is, in fact, exercising basic responsibilities in a democratic society and, though it may be slow, builds the capacity in individuals and communities to self-govern.*

Chapter 6. Where Are We Headed?

The person in charge of public involvmement in the San Juan School District is Jan Christiansen. Jan sees the following as directions for the future public involvement efforts in the San Juan School District:

1. *As more and more groups become involved in the problem solving process in the district, it will become necessary to concentrate on coordinating the efforts of each of the different groups. Groups will need to share with each other so that public involvement in the district will be a coordinated effort.*

2. *There is a need to start working with more faculty in the school to help them improve problem solving skills.*

3. *There is also a need to start working more with administrators to help them develop their public involvement skills in order for them to be able to work more effectively with the public.*

Unit 5. Summary

The San Juan RFD Strategy has three basic components: (1) The school community group, consisting of a representative group of educators, lay citizens and students who work collectively on school related concerns and develop recommendations to the school board and other appropriate levels. (2) The process facilitator team which acts as consultants to the school community groups and works with the groups to help members work more effectively together. The P.F.'s are skilled in group dynamics and problem-solving skills and transfer these skills by working closely with the leadership of the group and maintaining a low profile. In San Juan these people were employed by the district. (3) The five step problem-solving process used by the school community groups to: a. identify problems and concerns in the community; b. search for alternative approaches to solving the problem; c. plan for action using a particular approach; d. implement the plan; and e. assess the results and recycle.

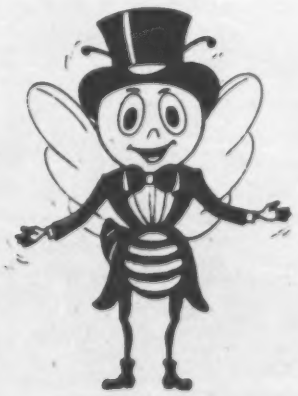
The San Juan School District used these three components of the RFD Strategy as a basis for a system of public involvement in the district. Trainers from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory provided training in the RFD Strategy through a two year period with assistance from the Community Education Unit, Office of the Utah State Board of Education. Training was given to the four facilitators and district staff who were involved in the project.

At the end of the first year of the project, the district decided to hire Jan Christiansen full time as a lead facilitator for

the district and Jim Dandy and Clyde Benally as half-time facilitators with half-time assignments in other areas.

The RFD project has proven to be very valuable to the district. There are at the present time four school community groups and one faculty task force which are very productively engaged in the educational process. Educators in San Juan are responding more accurately to the needs of the people of San Juan. The people feel better about the educational system because they have a part in developing the system. As one district administrator in San Juan said, "Although public involvement is time consuming, it really pays off in the long run. We spend little time putting out the fires we use to. Now it is a matter of spending time productively working together with community members on solutions to problems."

As the partnership between community and education is strengthened in San Juan, the concept of "us" and "them" referring to us, the community, and them as the educators separated and operating independently is becoming more and more "we together". As this progresses, education in the San Juan School District will become more and more responsive to the needs of the people.



Glossary

Below are words that have been used frequently in the text that may not have been defined adequately.

COMMUNITY/EDUCATION	*A philosophical concept calling for an improved partnership between community and education. It should be a partnership based upon mutual respect, equal status, positive interaction, and a sense of shared accountability. Within the concept, the schools and the community view each other as valuable resources. Through working creatively together, individual and community problems are solved and educational needs of the total community are met.*
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION DECISION MAKING	*Is the process of "engaging the public in determining the role the schools shall play in solving individual and community problems."[1] It is the sharing of responsibility and accountability at all appropriate levels.*
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT SPECIALIST/PROCESS FACILITATOR (P.F.)	*A person who works with groups of community people and educators helping them work more effectively together in order to solve education-related problems.*
RFD - THE RURAL FUTURES DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY	*Is a strategy for strengthening the capacities of rural school districts to involve their communities in engaging in educational planning and problem-solving.*[2]
SCHOOL COMMUNITY GROUP (S.C.G.)	*A school board appointed and legitimized representative body of citizens, students and school staff who work together to solve educational problems. Citizens, school staff administrators and students all contribute time, energy and ideas to the School Community Group and work out educational problems.*

TASK FORCE GROUP	*A group of interested citizens and educators formed for the specific purpose of addressing a particular problem identified by the school community group. This group includes experts in the problem area and other resource people who can be of assistance. Once the problem has been solved, the task force group is dissolved.*

[1] *For further information, see the State Board of Education's Position Paper on Community Education*

[2] *For further information, see the School Community Notebook, Rural Education Program, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon*

Appendix

The purpose of this appendix is to further explain the problem solving process and to provide examples of various techniques used with groups to achieve positive results.

Also included are "Critical Aspects of a Process Facilitator's Behavior" and "Characteristics of an Effective Group." These two articles have been developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory in Portland, Oregon and have been reprinted with their permission.

SYSTEMATIC PROBLEM SOLVING*

Whether we realize it or not, all of us go through a systematic process as we attempt to solve problems that confront us. This process includes focusing on the problem, searching for alternatives, planning for action, implementing the plan and assessing the results. For some, going from problem to solution takes place very quickly. Others take more time in considering the problem, exploring alternatives and developing a plan to solve the problem. Of course, the nature of the problem determines the process and the degree of sophistication that one employs.

Group problems solving is more difficult than individual problem solving. In group problem solving, there must be agreement that the problem exists, a clear understanding of the problem, common goals, and the skills and resources in the group or available to the group to solve the problem.

The advantages in using a systematic problem solving approach that incorporates opportunities for human interaction are many.

A list of advantages might include the following:

1. Schools working in a partnership with the community provide increased opportunities for human interaction which leads to greater individual growth and development.

2. Through involvement in the decision making process, people develop a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the decision.

3. When people have a clear understanding of the problem and the direction they are moving, common misunderstandings and conflicts are reduced.

*Adapted from The Process Facilitator's Manual, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon

4. *Systematic procedures accompanied by total group involvement lead to heightened interest and motivation on the part of group members.*

5. *Involving the public in educational decision making usually results in greater support in the community for the decision.*

6. *The process takes longer, but usually results in better and longer lasting decisions.*

Systematic problem solving can be broken down into five steps. The following pages include an explanation of each step and techniques that could be used in actual problem solving situations.

STEP 1: FOCUSING ON THE PROBLEM

The first step a group needs to take in the problem solving process is to identify the educational problems that exist in the community. This process is helped by first describing the situation.

The group also needs to ask itself if there are practical means to change the situation.

After identifying and clarifying the problem, and deciding if the situation could be changed or improved, the next step is to set a goal that describes where you would like to be. The goal is usually stated in terms that call for some action to be taken. The gap that exists between the present situation and where you would like to be is the problem.

With all problems there are barriers or obstacles that stand in the way of goal attainment. There are also positive forces or resources that can be utilized by the group to overcome the barriers and achieve the goal.

Solving the problem involves using the positive forces and resources available to remove or lessen the barriers that stand in the way of achieveing the goal.

TECHNIQUE #1 FOR STEP 1: FOCUSING ON THE PROBLEM

Step 1: Where Are We Now?

(Describe present situation)

Step 2: Where Would We Like to Be?

(Describe desired situation)

Step 3: What is the Gap or Problem?

(Describe the problem)

TECHNIQUE #2 FOR STEP 1: FOCUSING ON THE PROBLEM

FUTURING
(A Look into the Future)

This exercise is designed to bring out areas of concern of group members in a positive manner.

DIRECTIONS:

1. *Ask individuals of the group to imagine that they have been gone from the community for three years and have now returned.*

2. *Have each individual list the changes he/she would like to have happened while gone.*

3. *Ask individuals to pair up and combine like responses into a single list.*

4. *Have pairs form quads and combine their lists to one, prioritizing those they would most like to see happen.*

5. *Now have the total group come together and combine each of the quad's lists to one prioritized list.*

6. *The changes that are wanted in the community can now be developed into needs statements.*

STEP 2: SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVES

It is sometimes a natural step, once problems have been identified, for groups to go right to a solution. The problem with this approach is that groups may fail to explore all of the options and the eventual solution may not be the best or most practical one.

The purpose of this stage in the problem solving process is to make the group aware of all of its options and the implications of each option.

The first step in the search phase is to set up criteria for the solution. Criteria are conditions that the solution will have to meet in order to be satisfactory.

The alternative solution decided upon will be that solution which most nearly meets the criteria established.

The next step is to specify what is to be searched and by whom, and also to identify the resources that will be necessary to conduct the search. Along with this it is important to set up a system for collecting and managing data. Data based decisions are generally better decisions. Data based decisions that involve, in some way, all those affected by the problem make for optimum decision making.

The next step is to establish time limits for the search phase. If the group is fairly large, a task force or several task forces is recommended as a desirable method to organize for this phase of problem solving.

When the necessary data has been collected, it is the task of the group to assess all of the alternatives and decide which alternative or alternatives best meet the established criteria.

TECHNIQUE #1 FOR STEP 2: SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVES

	WHAT			WHO	WHEN
	RESOURCES				
	People	*Places*	*Things*	*Individuals or groups responsible to secure resources*	*Date search will be completed*
Local					
Outside					

TECHNIQUE #2 FOR STEP 2: SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVES

This technique provides a method of assessing all of the alternative solutions that have been discovered to determine which solution is best.

Various Alternative Solutions	CRITERIA				
1.	Contribution to goal X1	Cost X2	Feasibility X3	Time X2	Other Criteria
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					

DIRECTIONS: List the various solutions to the problem down the left hand side. Across the top are the criteria the solution needs to meet. If certain criteria are more important than others, then factors (X1, X2, X3, etc.) need to be assigned. You then give each solution a rating of high (1), medium (2), or low (3). After rating each and multiplying the rating by the importance factor, add up all of the ratings for each solution. The solution with lowest value should be the best.

STEP 3: PLANNING FOR ACTION

In beginning the planning stage, it would be helpful at this time to reassess the problem, the goals and objectives that you have developed and the chosen alternative solution to solve the problem. Any changes that need to be made should be made at this time before you get into the actual planning stage.

In developing a plan of action, you will want to identify the resources that are available to help you accomplish your goal, the barriers that exist that need to be overcome or alleviated if the goal is going to be achieved, and the various alternatives open to you in terms of specific actions that could be taken.

Once these steps are completed, an action plan can be developed. An action plan simply specifies who will do what, when and how.

At this stage in the problem solving process, it is also a good idea to begin working with outside groups affected by the problem in order to gain the necessary support and cooperation needed to be able to implement the plan.

If you haven't already done so in your objectives, you will also want to establish some criteria for success at this time. As you implement the plan you will want some measurable criteria to evaluate your performance. An example of a measurable objective might be:

> *A business and educational council will be established by October 1 in order that community resources for learning may be more effectively utilized by the schools.*

TECHNIQUE #1 FOR STEP 3: PLANNING FOR ACTION

Force Field Analysis

This technique is designed to help the group see all of the forces that are hindering and helping them reach a desired goal. The purpose is to identify these forces and then develop a plan to reduce or eliminate the negative forces.

Statement of the Goal or Problem

Positive Forces Going our Way	*Negative Forces Hindering the Reaching of the Goal*

Action steps to overcome the negative forces including who, how, and when objectives will be accomplished.

1.
2.
3.
4.

STEP 4: IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Implementation simply stated entails doing what you said you were going to do in your action plan.

Many action plans are first implemented on a trial or pilot basis. This approach gives you the opportunity to try something out on a limited basis before you make a full scale commitment of time and resources.

Based on studies conducted, there are five factors which seem to be important when measuring the success of a particular plan of action. These are:*

1. *Continuous planning*
2. *Maintaining group support (school and community)*
3. *Developing feelings of ownership and shared responsibility with the participants*
4. *Adequate meeting times*
5. *Ongoing training as needed*

As in the planning stage, sensitivity to changing conditions and circumstances in order to bring goals, objectives, plans, etc., into line with present realities is necessary for the successful implementation of a program or project.

**Rural Futures Development, Northwest Laboratory, Portland, Oregon*

TECHNIQUE #1 FOR
STEP 4: IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

Specific Planning Task	*Person Responsible*	*Completion Date*	*Resources*

STEP 5: ASSESSING THE RESULTS

The final stage of the process is critical. Many problem solving groups overlook this stage and in doing so fail to make the kind of continuous progress that they might otherwise would have been able to make.

There are basically three questions that a group will want to ask itself as they attempt to assess the results of their activities:

1. *What did we do?*
2. *How did we do it?*
3. *How do we feel about it?*

In answering those three questions, the group will want to consider any needed changes in organization or process that would make the group more effective in the future.

CRITICAL ASPECTS OF A PROCESS FACILITATOR'S BEHAVIOR * **

The Process Facilitator must create systematic linkage between the Facilitator system and the target system, develop confidence between the Facilitator and community members and achieve an acceptable image, status and rank within the target system. To do so, he or she must attend to the community aspects of behavior.

1. Pre-and Post-Entry Knowledge of the Target Community

   Knowledge must be gained about the target community itself and the nature of its multiple relationship and linkages with the outside at the regional level and with the society as a whole. It is strongly advised that the Process Facilitator gather as much general information as possible about the target area before entry. This general information gathering, which usually can be obtained outside the target community, is an essential part of the Process Facilitator's pre-entry preparation. It is important that the predominant socio-cultural, economic, political and physical resource patterns and anomalies of the region be understood by the Process Facilitator so that the dynamics and resistance to change is seen in its regional context.

   Upon entry into the community, the Process Facilitator should concentrate on getting to know the community members and starting his or her own study of the community. The future actions of the Process Facilitator depend in large part on the depth and accuracy of his or her knowledge of the multiple dimensions of the community.

2. Advancing and Guiding Instead of Decision Making

   This is a key concept in the total community development process. Case studies of successful and unsuccessful efforts consistently demonstrate the positive effects of the conscientious use of this behavior pattern by past Process Facilitators and the disasterous effects of its misuse.

3. Positive Techniques Instead of Negative Techniques

   The term "positive techniques" refers to working to stimulate creative responses on the part of community members and to support individuals and groups within the community as much as possible. The term "negative techniques" refers to the use of threats, coercion or playing one group off against another to achieve certain ends. Discouraging community members from discovering

*Taken from resources to The Process Facilitator's Manual in the Community Change Process (Phase IV resource 1/a) Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

**Adapted from The Parameters of a Training Program for Community Development Change Agents by Jeff Boyer, May 1, 1972.

for themselves what alternative courses of action are open to them in their attempt to solve community problems would be a negative technique.

4. Utilizing Traditional Culture

It is essential that the Process Facilitator understand the customs, work habits, physical motor patterns, beliefs, values and sentiments of the community and work within their context. This is a basic reason for having an outside Process Facilitator conduct a study of the community. Some of the classic failures of planned change programs were caused by agencies and programs neglecting to utilize the traditional and local culture.

5. Utilizing Legitimation of Local Leaders

A primary goal is to encourage the development of a dynamic, responsive local leadership team. As Process Facilitators get to know their communities, they should begin to work to support the creation of such a team. It is also important, particularly at first, that local official leaders be consulted with and given their due respect.

6. Flexibility in Approach

The Process Facilitator should be continually open to the possibility that new alternatives to community problems can come into focus that require a change in strategies and approaches. When the Process Facilitator's efforts to establish systematic linkage with the community have reached an impasse, his or her flexibility of approach is, of course, imperative if the program is to continue.

7. Continuity in the Project

Just as it is important that the Process Facilitator be flexible, it is also important--once the community has selected a project that should satisfy felt need(s)--that the Facilitator work to support the steady, continuous effort required to carry out the project. Needless energy, time and resources can be wasted, for instance, if a community begins one large project and abandons it for other projects. This is not to say that a community cannot carry out two or more projects simultaneously. However, care must be taken to prevent an overextension of the community past its own limitations, a situation that sometimes arises in the initial burst of enthusiasm at the beginning of a project. If more than one project is undertaken at a time, the projects should not duplicate each other's function, nor should they weaken each other's impact and effectiveness.

Process Facilitators should be aware of the various stages that the community development process usually takes, so that they can plan and adapt their approaches to the particular circumstance of each stage. The stages of development observed from Peace Corps

experiences are: (1) perception-awareness; (2) motivation; (3) movement; (4) mobilization; (5) quiescence and the possibility of recycle. Although these do not have to occur in clear-cut order, they are all contingent upon each other and the Community Change Process does have an important continuity that the Process Facilitator should work to maintain.*

8. *Involving the Local Population in Planning, Implementation and Maintenance*

One meausre of development and change is the extent to which community members are involved in the various stages of decision making and problem solving. Case studies of community development efforts consistently demonstrate the importance of following this strategy and the dangers of not encouraging community involvement.

9. *Avoiding Conflict*

Rarely do the processes of social change occur without some kind of conflict, whether it is between factions and interest groups in a community, or between the community and the larger power structures on the outside. The Process Facilitator should encourage the development of social mechanisms by which conflict can be given attention and resolved, rather than ignored. There are some instances when conflict and "confrontation" tactics are effective, but in most cases the efforts of a Process Facilitator to embroil factions in conflict will only be counter-productive.

10. *Observer and Learner*

The Process Facilitator in the role of observer and learner is essential to the establishment of systematic linkage with the community, particularly in the early period after entry. It is this role that the Process Facilitator must fill in order to conduct the community study, and any attempt to appear professional to the point of "knowing it all" almost always results in closing off meaningful feedback from the community members to the Process Facilitator.

11. *Respect and Esteem for Local Beliefs*

As obvious as this point seems, it remains one of the most neglected aspects of necessary Process Facilitator performance. The Facilitator

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**The parallel between this list and that of the NWREL Community Change Process is as follows: Perception-Awareness = The Community Seeks Help (Entry); Motivation = Identification and Analysis of Needs and Problems; Movement = Searching for Alternatives, Planning for Action, Implementing the Plan; Quiescence and the Possibility of Recycle - Evaluating the Plan.*

must develop a genuine sense of respect for local beliefs, customs and taboos--both religious and secular--even though they are not part of his or her own system of beliefs. This problem has particular relevance when a suggested innovation or change would challenge a traditional belief concerning the true nature of reality as perceived by community members. In general, the Facilitator must at least demonstrate respect for local beliefs if he or she is to be accepted in the community.

12. *Participation in the Community's Social, Cultural and Religious Activities*

Quite often this form of participation generates positive attitudes by people in the community towards the Process Facilitator, particularly if they have specifically invited him or her to share in the activity. On the other hand, behavior that is seen as "grandstanding"--making an aggressive attempt to show that "See there, I'm one of you!"--is a mockery. In such a case, community members would most likely reject future contact with the Process Facilitator.

13. *Establishing a Friendship Circle*

As is true with all humans, the Process Facilitator will simply like some people within the community more than others and will probably develop strong personal friendships with a few individuals. This type of friendship should not be confused with a "friendship circle," which should be developed purposely by the Process Facilitator as part of his or her task. Feedback communication from the various interest groups, power structures, class groups and minorities that make up a community is essential if the Process Facilitator is to assess the impact of his or her program and behavior. The "circle" should be formed by picking individuals from each of the groups mentioned above with whom the Process Facilitator feels comfortable, and vice verse, and developing an informal communication network. The key word in understanding the function of a friendship circle is "informal." Quite often formal channels of communication are very rigid or even closed to the Process Facilitator, and a friendship circle can possibly be the only effective medium of both feedback and meaningful communication between the Process Facilitator and the various community groups. Although the friendship circle does not have to meet regularly, or even at all, the agent should maintain frequent contact and communication with these key people.

14. *Recognizing and Sympathizing With the Happiness and Sadness of the Community*

Every community undergoes a cyclical series of events that produce collective positive and negative reactions on the part of community members. The Process Facilitator should develop a sensitivity to these changes in mood. Annual harvests, the fiesta of a patron saint or other festive holidays, periodic droughts or flooding and

crop failures are all important events with which the Process Facilitator must accommodate a program. Timing is an issue of relevance here, because it is possible for the sensitive Facilitator to gauge the general level of receptiveness to a new idea or innovation in relation to the general mood of the community at a given time. As Facilitators begin to plan their programs, they should take the cyclical mood of the people into account. A sudden disaster such as an unexpected flood can: (1) produce an immediate sense of unity, (2) further divide conflicting factions or (3) stop activity in a community project. The Process Facilitator should sense these changes and react in accordance with them.

15. *Treating the Local People as Intelligent and Rational Persons*

The sense of this point should be just as clear as the reason for respecting local beliefs, but unfortunately it is one of the behaviors expected of a Process Facilitator that is frequently violated. The ability to accept people for what they are is of critical importance here, and there is little doubt that every effective Process Facilitator possesses this quality. Quite often because of the Facilitator's own cultural or educational blinders, he or she cannot see the immediate rationality of a particular action made by individuals or groups within the community. It should be remembered that these people may be operating under a set of rules that is very different from what the Process Facilitator is used to. If the Facilitator is patient and observant enough, he or she will eventually learn that community behavior invariably is quite logical and is consistent with the larger system's values, beliefs and norms. Without this understanding, it will be virtually impossible for the Process Facilitator to establish systemic linkage, particularly in a cross-cultural situation.

16. *Model Personality*

This concept should not be taken as suggesting that there is only one type of personality and one set of expected behavior for an effective Process Facilitator, for nothing could be more absurd. It merely means that if a particular project demands sacrifices and personal discipline or maintenance of particular attitudes from community members, the Process Facilitator should be sure to make similar sacrifices or maintain those same attitudes. As much as possible, he or she should quietly set an example for others. Quite often the Process Facilitator brings into focus the discrepancy between "what is:" and "what ought to be" in the minds of the community members, and his or her actions should be more consistent with behavior associated with "ought to be."

17. *Realistic Expectations*

One of the cardinal sins that Process Facilitators have committed in the past is to suggest a series of rapid changes that simply are not within the realm of possibility in the foreseeable future. This only serves to increase needlessly the level of frustration within the community. Once community members realize that the new

felt needs prompted by the Process Facilitator will not be satisfied, bitterness and a refusal to participate in community projects result. Therefore, the Facilitator should suggest alternatives and changes that have a realistic chance of success.

18. Fulfilling Promises

In order that Process Facilitators may be seen as dependable and realistic, they should be very careful to make only those promises that they know can be met. Unkept promises obviously destroy the Facilitator's credibility in the eyes of community members.

19. Living in the Target Community

This is not always possible, particularly when a Process Facilitator must cover more than one community. It is nevertheless very helpful in establishing good systemic linkage for the Facilitator to live in the target community. His or her continued presence not only indicates a special concern about the people, problems and projects of the community, but it also serves to enhance the Facilitator's knowledge of that community by experiencing it both in the hours of work and the hours of leisure.

20. Acting According to Local Survey Rather Than Cliches, Stereotypes and Textbooks

As experienced Process Facilitators realize, every community in the world is unique. It is important that action be based on that uniqueness as it is found through the Facilitator's specific observations and formal and continuous community study.

HOW TO RECOGNIZE AN EFFECTIVE GROUP*

1. Members do not ignore seriously intended contributions.

   Each member needs to know the effect of his remarks if he is to improve the way he participates in the group.

   When other members do not respond, the speaker cannot know whether:

   a. They did not understand his remark

   b. They understood it and agreed with it

   c. They understood it but disagreed with it

   d. They understood it but thought it was irrelevant

   When this principle is followed, the discussion is cumulative and the group moves together. When it is not followed, the discussion becomes scattered, the same points are made over and over, and members feel no progress occurring.

2. Members check to make sure they know what a speaker means before they agree or disagree with his contribution.

   The question, "What is it?" should precede the question, "How do we feel about it?" For example, understanding is prior to evaluation. Thus, group members frequently use paraphrase, perception checks and provisional summaries to clarify their assumptions of what others are saying and feeling.

3. Each member speaks only for himself and lets others speak for themselves.

   Each members states his reactions as his own. He does not attribute them to others or give the impression he is speaking for others.

   Each member reports his own reactions honestly. He recognizes that unless he is true to himself, the group cannot take his feelings into account.

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*Adapted from Thelen, Herbert A., Dynamics of Groups at Work. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963, pages 285-289. Taken from resources to the RFD manuals, Resource 15 (Group Dynamics), Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, Portland, Oregon

4. *All contributions are viewed as belonging to the group, to be used or not as the group decides.*

   A member who makes a suggestion does not have to defend it as his against the others. Instead, all accept responsibility for evaluating it as the joint property of the group.

5. *All members participate but in different and complementary ways.*

   When some members fulfill task functions, others carry out interpersonal functions. While some members are providing information, others are making sure it is understood and organized, or identifying points of agreement and disagreement.

   Each member does not participate always in the same way. Instead, he fulfills whatever function is appropriate to his interest in the task, his information and the behavior of other group members.

6. *Whenever the group senses it is having trouble getting work done, it tries to find the reason.*

   Some symptoms of difficulty are excessive hair-splitting, points repeated over and over, suggestions that plop and are not considered, private conversations in subgroups, two or three people dominating the discussion, members taking sides and refusing to compromise, ideas being attacked before they are completely expressed and apathetic participation.

   When such symptoms occur, the group shifts easily from working on the task to discussing its own interpersonal process.

   Discussing interpersonal process prevents pluralistic ignorance. For example, each member of the group is confused but thinks he is the only one.

7. *The group recognizes what it does is what it has chosen to do. No group can avoid making decision; it cannot choose <u>whether</u> to decide, only <u>how</u> to decide. Thus, an effective group makes decisions openly rather than by default.*

   When a group faces an issue, it must make a decision. It may agree openly to take action. It may agree openly to take no action. It may decide by default to take no action. Deciding by default not to act has the same impact on the problem as openly agreeing not to act. However, decisions by default are felt as failures by group members and create tensions among them. A group grows more by openly agreeing not to act than by not acting because they could not agree.

The group views each decision as a provisional trial which can be carried out, evaluated and revised in light of experience. The group is aware each decision need not be everything or nothing and need not last forever.

When the group makes a decision which it does not carry out, it recognizes the real decision was one not to act, although the apparent decision was to act. The group openly discusses why the apparent and real decision were not the same. They try to learn why some members agreed with the decision, although they felt no personal commitment to carry it out.

The group makes decisions in different ways depending upon the kind of issue and the importance of the outcome. The group may vote, delegate the decision to a special subgroup, flip a coin or require complete consensus. The crucial factor is the group has agreement on the way it makes decisions.

8. *The group brings conflict into the open and deals with it.*

   The members recognize conflict as inevitable. They know the choice is theirs as to whether the conflict will be open (subject to group control) or disguised (out of control).

9. *The group looks upon behavior which hinders its work as happening because the group allows or even wants it; not just as the result of a "problem member."*

   A person who continually introduces irrelevancies can change the topic only if other members follow his lead. Instead of labeling him as the problem, the group considers this tactic a group problem. They determine why they all let it happen. Perhaps the other members welcome his digressions as a way of avoiding the open conflict which would occur if they stayed on the topic.

   Likewise, the person who talks too much...jokes too much... continually attacks others..or never participates, is a sign of a problem shared by the total group. The group needs to discuss it openly as "our problem" to eliminate the disruption.

   The group gives helpful information to individuals about the impact of their actions on the group. It does not, however, analyze, dissect and work them over.